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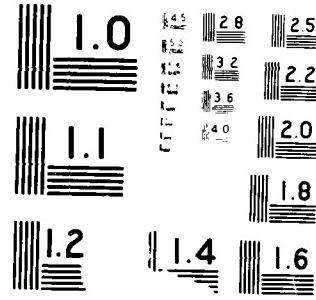
THE USAF ACADEMY HONOR SYSTEM(U) AIR COMMAND AND STAFF 1/1  
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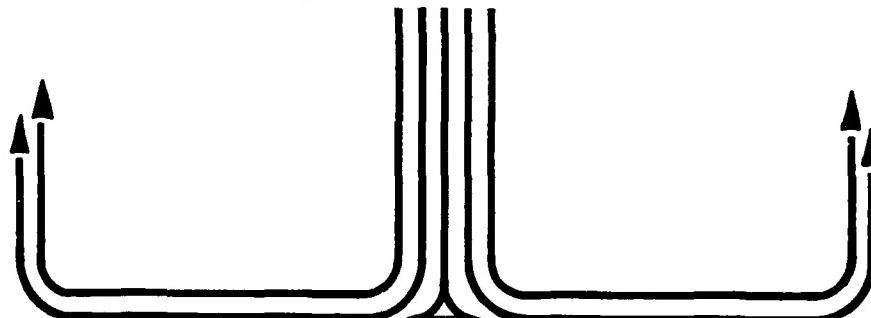


## STUDENT REPORT

THE USAF ACADEMY HONOR SYSTEM

MAJOR MARK A. HYATT                    88-1315  
"insights into tomorrow"

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**TITLE** THE USAF ACADEMY HONOR SYSTEM

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Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of  
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In June, 1984, the Superintendent of the USAF Academy suspended cadre administration of their honor code. This was a result of revelations during the Spring, 1984 honor scandal at the USAF Academy. An Honor Assessment Committee was formed to review the situation and present an acceptable honor system to be voted on by the Cadet Wing. Many of the recommendations were based upon an indepth survey given to cadets in the Fall of 1984. Follow-on surveys were given in Spring, 1986 and Spring, 1987. This research project evaluates these three surveys to determine if cadets perceive that their honor system is working. The study concludes that there are many areas cadets have identified on these surveys as needing change. Recommendations are made based on the findings.			
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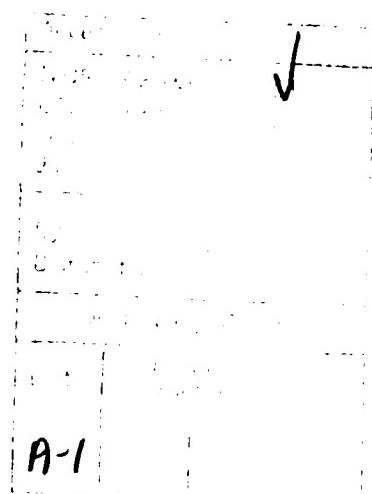
## PREFACE

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This study is being accomplished for the Office of the Commandant at the USAF Academy, Colorado. In the ongoing effort to maintain the highest standards of honor, ethics, and integrity among cadets at the USAF Academy, three surveys have been designed by the Academy Staff, then administered to the cadets. Through interpretation of these survey results, conclusions are drawn about cadet perceptions of their sense of honor, and various problems associated with their current honor system.

Support and assistance for this study were provided by personnel in the Registrar's Office of Research and Evaluation, and the Directorate of Honor and Ethics at the Air Force Academy, Colorado.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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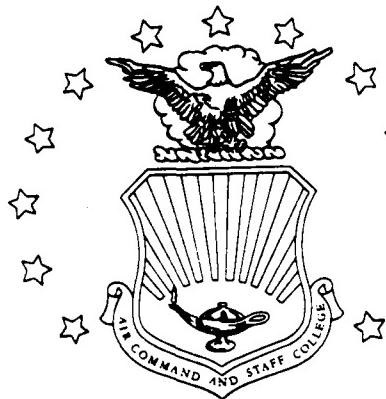
Major Mark A. Hyatt graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1974. In 1975 he earned his pilot wings at Williams AFB, Arizona. He remained at Williams AFB as an Instructor Pilot until 1978. In 1979, he accomplished a Master's Degree in Public Administration, in residence, at Arizona State University. Major Hyatt then transitioned to the RF-4C as an Aircraft Commander at Shaw AFB, South Carolina. He left there in 1980 to serve as a Flight Commander, Instructor Pilot, and Wing Executive Officer at RAF Alconbury, England. He completed Air Command and Staff College by seminar in 1983. In 1984 he was assigned to the USAF Academy, Colorado, as an Air Officer Commanding for two years. In 1986 he became the Director of Honor and Ethics at the Academy. During this assignment he completed the National Defense University's National Security Management Course by correspondence. Major Hyatt is married and has three children.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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REPORT NUMBER 88-1315

AUTHOR(S) MAJOR MARK A. HYATT, USAF

TITLE THE USAF ACADEMY HONOR SYSTEM

I. Purpose: To determine if the Cadet Wing at the USAF Academy is satisfied with the Cadet Honor System since major changes were made in January, 1985. If there are problems, what are they and what should be done to solve them?

II. Problem: Do USAF Academy cadets perceive that their present Honor System is working? The honor scandal at the Academy in the Spring of 1984 caused the Superintendent to conclude that the honor system was broken. The system was suspended in the Summer of 1984 while cadets and officers investigated.

III. Plan: The Academy Superintendent appointed the Honor Assessment Committee to thoroughly review all aspects of the system. Besides input to this committee by key cadets and officers, the primary means of determining cadets' feelings about the Honor Code and Honor System was a comprehensive, 140 question, survey given to over three quarters of the Cadet Wing. Subsequent to acceptance of the new system, two additional surveys have been given. The data used in this study is taken directly from these three surveys, the Fall, 1984, the Spring, 1986, and the Spring, 1987 surveys. Based on my recent experience as an Air Officer Commanding during the turbulent transition period in 1984 and as Director of Honor and Ethics last year, I have identified major problem areas based on questions in the three surveys.

## CONTINUED

IV. Conclusions: There are several important conclusions drawn from the survey. The most important is that cadets want to be honorable, feel that they are honorable for the most part, and want to retain their Honor Code in its present form. Problem areas are as follows: First, cadets are not well enough informed about controversial and important honor cases. Second, cadets do not feel that they are treated as trusted individuals by Academy personnel. Next, they think that honor is abused to enforce cadet regulations. Additionally, cadets suggest that they sometimes vote "no-violation" at Wing Honor Boards as a means of applying "discretion" on a case that they know is a violation. Honor education is rated low because many cadets think it is too concerned with administration and mechanics rather than developing broad ethical values that are applicable for a lifetime. They also feel that there is not enough feedback from Wing Honor Boards and Honor Sanctions Boards. Lastly, cadets indicate that toleration is an essential part of their code, but not necessarily a violation of their personal honor.

V. Recommendations: First, in order to keep cadets more informed on the outcome of important cases, honor representatives should discuss these cases in more detail with their squadrons. Second, cadets will feel more trusted if officers start using cadets to police themselves to a greater extent. For example, during the common graded review period, cadet proctors would be a great first step. Next, cadets need education on how the honor system makes life easier for them. Form 19 procedures, use of alpha rosters for attendance, and "all-rights" inspections can make life easier for cadets and the administration. The current system featuring the Honor Sanctions Board needs to be retained in order to encourage cadets serving on Wing Honor Boards to vote violation/no-violation rather than voting a sanction. There are several recommendations on how to improve Honor Education. More small group discussions in squadrons will give dissenters a chance to see that the "majority" have positive comments about the honor system. Improve cadet honor surveys by keeping them more standardized over time. This way, similar questions can be used to facilitate better longitudinal analysis. Another recommendation is to have cadets list major weaknesses in the system, then the administration can prioritize areas of concern. Expand the current "adult values education program" from Basic Cadet Training to include Upperclassmen. Also, role-playing can help cadets determine how they should confront an honor situation. Concise monthly updates should be provided to the squadrons so honor representatives can better inform. The Wing Honor Education Officer could present bi-monthly 5-10 minute videos on areas of concern.

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Information dissemination is essential to maintaining a healthy system. Lastly, since many cadets question the fact that toleration is considered a violation of their personal honor, consideration should be given to making toleration a Class III violation. Retain the toleration clause in the Honor Code, but treat it differently for sanction purposes.

## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

#### BACKGROUND AND CADET HONOR SYSTEM AT USAF ACADEMY

"We will not lie, steal, or cheat, nor tolerate among us anyone who does" (7:1).

The United States Air Force Academy Cadet Wing accepted the present Honor Code in September of 1956. The first class at the Air Force Academy knew that cadets must maintain the high standards expected of Air Force officers. And the best way to learn and internalize personal honor is by practice. "Aristotle contended that moral virtue is attained through habit" (7:1). The Air Force Academy was charged with "developing character essential to leadership...in the United States Air Force" (7:2). Character development starts with being honorable in all things. This foundation allows each cadet to establish a pattern of behavior that he can follow for the rest of his life.

Since 1956, over 1300 cadets have resigned or been dis-enrolled before graduation because of honor code violations. For all years between 1956 and 1987, on the average, approximately 1 percent of the Cadet Wing departed each year because of an honor violation. The honor system has worked at the Academy, although sometimes it was a painful process, especially during several honor scandals. The nontoleration aspect of the honor code has been essential to the enforcement of the code. The cadets police themselves and that is the way the system works best. Most of the scandals were initiated by cadets who would not tolerate the unethical behavior. Considering this backdrop, we can now look at what happened in 1984.

#### HONOR ENVIRONMENT AT THE USAF ACADEMY IN 1984

In June of 1984, Lt Gen Winfield Scott, the Superintendent of the USAF Academy, gathered all available cadets and officers to announce that the Cadet Honor System was not working. Therefore, cadet administration of the honor system would be suspended until further notice. This was brought on by an honor scandal in May 1984. The scope of the problem surfaced during the investigation of a cadet cheating ring in a Physics 411 class. Testimony from the violators indicated that the honor problem ran much deeper than just the cadets who were initially brought forward on cheating charges.

Never before had any Academy Superintendent taken such a bold move. Through my involvement as an Air Officer Commanding during this period, I became aware that he was correct in his estimation of the honor situation among the Cadet Wing. He immediately set up an "amnesty" program in which cadets could "confess" any previous honor violations from their cadet days to their Air Officer Commanding. There would be no punishment and no records kept of these violations. The purpose of this program was to help the administration gain an accurate picture of the magnitude of the honor problem in the Cadet Wing. General Scott's amnesty program brought about many revelations. Major problems did exist in the Wing.

From my experience with cadets reporting honor violations to me, it seems that most violators first compromised their integrity by tolerating other violations. Then they were insidiously drawn into "hard core" violations. By tolerating, they were now violators and were subject to the same single sanction of disenrollment from the Academy. Many cadets felt that since they had already violated the Honor Code, they might as well take advantage of other "tempting" compromising situations. Hence, many cadets fell into the grips of dishonorable cliques within the Wing.

Cadet loyalties had developed toward small groups such as athletic teams, cliques within a squadron, clubs, etc. These relationships formed quicker and were stronger than large group (Wing/Academy) loyalties. This reflects the feelings of the cadet's civilian contemporaries in high school and college. The highly competitive environment at the Academy had provided a conducive environment for this major honor crisis.

## Chapter Two

### CADET HONOR SURVEYS

#### THE HONOR ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

The Honor Assessment Committee (HAC) was chartered by the Superintendent in the fall of 1984 to determine the depth of the current honor problems at the Air Force Academy, consider alternatives for changing the honor system, and find out what options the cadets preferred through a wing-wide survey. The HAC first considered the results of the amnesty program introduced by General Scott. When cadets reported honor violations to their Air Officer Commanding (AOC), a memo describing the violation was forwarded to the Vice Commandant of the Cadet Wing. This memo was destroyed once a tally of the type of violation was recorded. Only a handful of key officials were ever privy to the total number and type of violations in the Cadet Wing.

The HAC had representation from all primary mission elements at the USAF Academy. Athletics, military, faculty, staff, and cadets all participated on this committee. Nine out of the twelve members were USAF Academy graduates. Once they knew the magnitude of the breakdown in honor at the Academy, they addressed some key areas they thought might lead to solutions. They wanted to know how "all-encompassing" the honor code should be. Is nontoleration a necessary part of the code? Does the wording of the code need to be different? How does duty fit into the concept of honor? To what degree, if any, do officers need to be involved in the honor system? And finally is the problem with the code or its administration?

In order to help the HAC make recommendations for changes, they put together a survey that was given to most of the Cadet Wing. Based on the results of the survey, the revised cadet honor system was proposed and voted on during the fall of 1984. It was initiated in January 1985.

#### SURVEY DEVELOPMENT AND SIGNIFICANCE

The purpose of this study is to determine from the three most recent surveys if the USAF Academy cadets perceive that their present honor system is working. Do cadet attitudes reflect an overall confidence in their system? Is there a trend towards greater acceptance and faith in the system or towards another breakdown? The surveys were developed by three agencies at the Academy: the Registrar's Office of Research and

Evaluation, the Department of Behavioral Science and Leadership, and the Director of Honor and Ethics for the Cadet Wing. Each agency was allowed various inputs into the surveys. The objectives of these surveys were to reveal cadet perceptions, attitudes, and opinions on their honor system and ethical values. The surveys were administered in the fall of 1984 (cadet administration of the honor system was suspended at this time), spring of 1986, and spring of 1987. Both the Fall, 1984 and Spring, 1987 surveys included over 75 percent participation of the cadets in the wing. The Spring, 1986 survey included only several hundred cadets, so this lack of significance must be considered when reviewing the results of that survey.

There are three important items to be considered in these surveys. First, most cadets have never experienced an honor board or investigation firsthand. They have received many hours of instruction on how the system works, but most have no "hands-on" experience. Also, the Cadet Wing is a great "rumor mill." Sometimes when cases are decided, many cadets disagree with the outcome based on the limited facts they know on a given case. Therefore, many cadets create opinions based on rumors and opinions rather than facts. Information dissemination about controversial honor cases is a problem at the Academy which will be addressed later in this report. Lastly, the Fall, 1984 survey was 140 questions long. This survey length is too long and a few surveys were "Christmas treed" due to lack of interest. The Spring, 1986 and Spring, 1987 surveys were 44 questions and 64 questions long, respectively. Considering time availability and cadet attention span, 50 to 60 questions is an optimal survey length. Open-ended, write-in responses were optional in the Spring, 1987 survey and this proved to be very helpful in determining areas of concern. These should definitely be included on all future surveys.

#### IDENTIFYING PROBLEM AREAS

This is the Cadet Honor Code and cadets are central to its operation. Surveys are an effective way for cadets to communicate their feelings on the sensitive and important subject of honor. There are three major problem areas identified in the honor surveys. In order of significance, they are: the structure and functioning of the system, the Honor Education Program, and the "nontoleration" clause in the Honor Code.

Before we look closely into each of the major areas, it should be mentioned that the cadets think very highly of their personal honesty and its importance. Ninety-one percent of cadets say they are personally honorable (9:56). Eighty-two percent do not agree that the Honor Code requires drastic behavioral change on their part (9:17). The cadets know what is right and wrong. Seventy-four percent say they already had the code's three basic values when they entered the Academy (9:57). This is good considering the society and high school environment cadets come out of. From my discussions with cadets, many report

that cheating and lying is rampant in their high schools. Most importantly, 85 percent say that they and peers are most important in developing honor (9:45). It is their code. The perception should be that they are administering the system. The officer's place is to function as coach and advisor. Therefore, did General Scott abandon a successful honor system or did he develop a more realistic and productive one?

## Chapter Three

### STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE HONOR SYSTEM

#### CADET PERCEPTIONS

The structure and functioning of the cadet honor code is the most striking area of change since the cadets approved their new system. The subjects to be addressed in this chapter range from perceptions held by cadets, to policies that bother cadets and erode their confidence in their honor system, to the administration of an honor violation. Cadet perceptions about the health of their honor system are paramount to its successful operation. I propose various solutions to these problems based on my interpretation of their survey responses and my recent years of experience as an Air Officer Commanding and Director of Honor and Ethics.

Approximtely two-thirds of cadets still feel that their honor system is healthy (8:9) (9:7). According to Lt Col McFarland's

Report to the Honor Advisory Committee on Results of the 1987 Honor Survey, "the two most important strengths identified by the cadets were the ideals and standards stressed by the code and how the code helps develop integrity" (5:17). This was based on 1565 write-in attachments to the 1987 honor survey. "The next most frequent comments on the strength of the system were that it is run by cadets" (5:17). These are good cadet perceptions as to the healthy state of the cadet honor system. Also, the cadets generally feel that their system is fair and just (8:8) (9:9). The almost 30 percent of cadets who disagreed that the system is fair and just probably are not well informed as to the details of controversial honor cases. As Director of Honor and Ethics, many a cadet would complain to me about an inequity in the system based on a case they had heard about. I would educate them on the details associated with that case and they would usually then feel much better about the system. Cadet honor representatives must discuss more "tough" cases with the cadets in their squadrons. Since voting members on the Wing Honor Boards are drawn from various segments of the Wing population, we must assume that most cadets would agree with the board findings if they knew all the facts of each case. Considering all of this, we can say that the honor system is healthy but needs better communication of the case results.

There has been quite a change since the 1984 survey in how the cadets feel they are trusted. In 1984, 92 percent of cadets felt that the faculty trusted them (6:25). Now in 1987, 78 per-

cent of the cadets do not agree that Academy policies treat them as trusted people (9:31). This is probably based on new policies that have been put in place as a result of the 1984 honor scandal. The common graded review period between 0700 and 0800 each morning is one sign. Spacing between cadets in test rooms and officer monitors make the cadets feel untrusted. The reduced emphasis on take-home work in some courses has also eroded cadet confidence in their faculty trust of them. Possibly cadet monitors could fill that function in the examination room. That would increase the perception that the system is cadet run.

#### ABUSE OF CADET HONOR CODE TO ENFORCE REGULATIONS

This area of discussion deals with perceived abuse of the cadet honor system to enforce regulations. This is one of the two major areas that cadets making write-in responses to the 1987 survey thought were weaknesses of the code (5:17).

According to all three surveys, cadets overwhelmingly say that they have seen the honor system used to enforce regulations. In 1987, 41 percent say that the honor system is used excessively to enforce discipline (9:13). Cadets also indicated that 67 percent feel the system covers an increasing number of specifics (9:39). Such items as cutting a page from a library book; not paying for extra people in a hotel room; writing a bad check; borrowing personal property for an extended time; and tolerating a minor deception are all thought by a majority of cadets to be discipline violations, not honor violations. The problem with these alledged abuses of the honor system boils down to intent. When you ask a cadet if it's okay to tell his girlfriend a small lie, many will say yes. But in the 1986 Davis honor case, the Wing Honor Board looked into the "act and intent" of the accused cadet, as all honor boards do, and decided that he did intend to gain from his deception. So the staff at the Academy should stress with cadets that these so called "minor deceptions" depend on the in-depth, soul-searching deliberation by the seven cadets and one officer on the honor board to determine beyond a reasonable doubt if a cadet is guilty. The key is to look past all the clutter and into the heart and intent of the accused cadet. Honor representatives must address their squadrons on this important subject so that clear insight into the honor system can be achieved by the average cadet. Also, this subject can be the subject of a short video starring the Wing Honor Chairman and Wing Honor Education Officer.

Furthermore, it is important for cadets to realize that in certain instances, use of the cadet honor code makes life much easier for cadets. The Commandant is well within his rights to stop every cadet at the North and South gates all weekend and have the security policeman verify that each cadet is actually signed out and authorized a privilege. AOCs could be posted in the cadet squadrons to monitor proper serving of confinements. Instead, it is much more appealing for cadets and officers to have the cadet sign out on a Form 19 and indicate that he is

indeed authorized to take that privilege. The Cadet in Charge of Quarters will sign a form indicating that all confinements were served properly. There are many examples of how cadet life is made easier and more efficient by use of the honor system in daily activities. Discussion of this issue with cadets each August would help alleviate the annual complaints on this subject.

#### ADMINISTRATION OF AN HONOR VIOLATION

The cadet honor system since January 1985 has continually impressed people. The toughest group to convince is the USAF Academy graduate community. But over the past 3 years as the Superintendent, Commandant, Vice Commandant, and Director of Honor and Ethics travel and brief various groups on the structure and function of the new system, one result is universal; the audience realizes that the Academy is working harder than ever before in this area and the results are better than ever. The most encouraging statistic is that 75 percent of all honor violations are now admitted by the accused cadet. On the average, there have been twice as many cadet honor cases, mostly due to cadet self-reporting and cadets encouraging peers to self-report.

In the surveys, cadets indicate that they think the system is working. The Air Force Review Group recently gave very high ratings after their 1987 in-depth inspection of the USAF Academy Cadet Honor System. Of course, there were minor suggestions for improvement and most of those changes were made immediately after they were identified.

Cadets wanted more officer involvement. In the 1984 survey, they said that they wanted increased officer involvement in deciding guilt or innocence and punishments for violations (6:106,107). From my discussions last year with the Group Honor Vice Chairmen and various honor representatives, 80 percent told me they felt that the officer involvement was constructive. In the Wing Honor Board, there is no doubt that the chairman is running the proceedings. The cadets indicate that they like the "operational" or "real world" insight that officers provide on the board. As seen in the 1986 survey, only 23 percent disagree with the statement that some members of honor boards vote "no violation," even though the facts dictate otherwise, as a means of applying "discretion" at the honor board level (8:15). This shows that cadets in general have a tough time coming to a guilty finding which they know will terminate a comrade's career. This is understandable in light of current values held by our society.

Because of increased officer involvement at all levels of the honor system, there has been a large increase in the man-hours spent at the Academy in the area of honor. This effort has not been wasted. The most impressive example of officer involvement is the Honor Sanctions Board (HSB). Besides giving consistent punishments over time and new Commandants, the HSB is

a place of learning for cadet honor violators. As recorder for the HSB, I have continually witnessed the best counseling any 18 to 24 year old could ever get on the subject of honor and ethics. The three senior colonels and two senior cadets on the HSB have held violators and observers spellbound during their questioning and discussion of the cases. Furthermore, approximately 75 percent of the cadets who appear before the HSB are retained as cadets and are counseled by the HSB. To me, the HSB and the various sanctions, such as anonymous letters to the wing, apologies to offended parties, briefings given by violators to their squadron on lessons learned; AOC and honor representative counselling; and constructive creative honor projects as approved by the HSB, are the most beneficial parts of the new cadet honor system.

## Chapter Four

### HONOR EDUCATION

#### IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS

The Honor Education Program has consistently been rated low by cadets. It has been identified as being boring and too concerned with details of administration rather than helping to develop broad ethical values (6:87) (9:27,29). For this reason, it is essential that some changes be made in the Honor Education Program. First, there must be better avenues for cadets to voice discontent with the system. Also, changes in the methods of conducting honor training should be made. There should be a shift away from the mechanics of the system towards developing ethical fundamentals that will be applicable for a lifetime. Lastly, honor board results could be packaged more interestingly. Cadet interest should be held at a high level for this most important subject.

How can cadets effectively communicate their feelings about honor issues? Theoretically, they should address any problems that they have with their squadron honor representative. In actuality, a lot of honor opinions and notions are formed in small groups. This usually occurs at mealtime, in "rap" sessions among classmates in the dormitory, or in short discussions on the way to class. It seems that the only way the administration gets feedback from cadets is on the annual survey or situational complaints about the outcome of a certain honor case. Peter G. Beinetti, senior vice president for a top management consulting firm, suggests that "over the past two decades, industry after industry has become victimized by a failure to focus on the customer." (1:44) He cites examples of many successful businesses that have aggressively sought out the opinions and desires of their customers. Cadets in the honor system are the customers. One way the administration could help find out strengths and weaknesses of the honor system is to improve the cadet survey. The questions discussing strengths and weaknesses of the honor system must be more relevant. Possibly, a list of specific items from previous surveys could be used to build a comprehensive list of specifics. Cadets could then rank order the perceived problem areas. Then the honor education staff could prioritize weaknesses such as using honor to enforce regulations, the toleration issue, or honor/duty related problems. The administration must take this action to reduce the percentage of cadets who think that a certain part of the honor system is not working. Otherwise, cadet compliance with that aspect of the system will not be acceptable.

In both the 1984 and 1987 surveys, a set of questions was asked about who was responsible for helping cadets to develop their sense of honor. The results to these questions in both surveys were the same. The most important person in developing a sense of honor is "self." Second most important in perception were other cadets. And thirdly, the squadron honor representative was identified (6:92-95) (9:45-47). So it is apparent that while the Honor Education Program does a good job of teaching mechanics, the real values are developed "in the trenches" in the cadet squadrons. Therefore, if the education program is to be improved, focus must be on the interpersonal relations among cadets, especially the informal cadet leaders.

#### EMPHASIS ON VALUES NOT MECHANICS

A common theme throughout the honor surveys suggests that the education program places too much emphasis on the mechanics of the system. Knowing that you should confront a suspected honor violator and actually doing it are two different things. The Academy must build fundamental ethical values that are applicable at the Academy, then for a lifetime. Of the 1987 survey write-in responses, one of the two major weaknesses identified is that the honor code was used to enforce regulations and was not teaching broad general aspects of honor and integrity (5:17). This is backed up by the fact that 44 percent of cadets in the 1987 survey do not agree that the Honor Education Program can possibly increase one's sense of honor (9:28). This must change if the program is truly to be effective.

During basic cadet training, the chaplains provide 6 hours of Adult Values Education to the new cadets. I have observed many hours of this training in my capacity as an Air Officer Commanding and Director of Honor and Ethics. Some lessons from this valuable program can be carried over to the cadet Honor Education Program. The subjects and examples used in this program deal mainly with real-life ethical and moral dilemmas. They start on a basic personal level and progress to an advanced leadership situation. I feel that the honor education staff should work with the chaplains to produce an advanced program for upperclass cadets. This program should build on the fundamentals learned in basic training. But the emphasis in this values training should be on ethical dilemmas that an Air Force officer could face on and off the job. They must stress that like the cadet honor code, an officer's ethics and integrity are in the public eye at all times so the highest standards must be upheld in all situations. The chaplains program, therefore, can be expanded to augment honor training.

Cadets suggest through the surveys that the most important persons to help in developing a sense of honor are first oneself, and then other cadets. So after a cadet's initial honor system indoctrination on the mechanics of the system, very little reinforcement on structure is necessary until an individual gets

involved in the system as a board member or suspected violator. Instead, small group discussions of honor issues are more beneficial. From monitoring honor training sessions over the past 3 years, I have noticed that cadets get most interested in honor education when a controversial aspect or case is discussed. The best advantage of small group discussion is the learning that takes place as cadets discuss the pros and cons of both sides of a case. In essence, they begin to become an honor board and try to understand the case more fully. Another advantage is that the minority of cadets who are "negative" on the honor system will become aware that the majority of cadets have positive comments about the system. The negative minority will shift toward acceptance of the values of the majority. Hence, the education program will work at the level where influence is most effective, on the cadet to cadet level. This discussion should be led by honor representatives or cadets in the chain of command because they are the most socialized and will best keep discussions on the right track.

Outstanding benefits can be reaped in the honor education program by "role-playing." Within a small group, preferably element size, playing out a cadet's confrontation of a good friend's possible honor violation would help cadets visualize themselves in this tough situation. Open discussion should follow this scenario. The cadets can then learn how they're supposed to act in certain situations just like they did as children, by watching others. Most cadets I have asked said they don't know how they would react if confronted with an honor incident. They "hoped" they would do the right thing. Just like emergencies in an airplane, they must practice and think about how they will react to these tough situations if they are expected to do it right the first time.

Another area that would help streamline the honor education program is to consolidate it under the Director of Honor and Ethics. Based on my experience, there has been very little cooperation between the Director of Honor Training (CWITH) and the Director of Honor and Ethics (CWH). CWITH works for the Deputy Commandant for Military Instruction (CWI). This set-up is not conducive to proper development of the best education program possible. CWH is held responsible for many aspects of the honor education program but has no authority to task CWITH. Past cooperation has been minimal because of priorities established in CWI which do not put honor education first. Locating CWITH near CWH is a positive step. But the next logical and essential step is to allow him to report directly to CWH.

Lastly, little over half of the cadets in the 1987 survey do not agree that Wing Honor Boards and Honor Sanctions Board give enough feedback (9:50). Cadets need to know the results of boards. A concise monthly update is sorely needed. The honor education staff should produce a monthly honor case update for presentation to each squadron. A very short synopsis of each case could be covered with detailed cadet X letters available if the audience wants to inquire about a given case. That way

cadets could see trends developing and also get a feel for what the honor board considers a violation. This communication is essential to a healthy rumor-free honor system.

## Chapter Five

### THE TOLERATION CLAUSE

#### BASIS OF THE TOLERATION CLAUSE

The cadet honor system at the Air Force Academy would not work without the nontoleration aspect of the honor code. It is the backbone of the system that requires each cadet to confront a suspected honor violator (7:9). Cadet enforcement of their system works. Since changes were made to the honor system in January 1985, there has been approximately a 40 percent increase in cadet initiated honor cases. This is a result of reduced sanctions for many honor violations and suggests that cadets are now more willing to do what must be done to make their system work.

The Honor Code Reference Handbook says, "If you observe a possible honor violation, normally you should confront the suspected cadet and ask for an explanation" (7:9). Cadets told me on numerous occasions that confronting a suspected honor violation was the toughest thing they ever had to do. One of the cadets in the Sixth Cadet Squadron told me that he didn't know if he could turn in a cadet for a violation again. He said that he was harassed by some cadets for doing what he knew was right and he felt guilty about "causing the violator to leave the Academy." I assured this cadet that his actions were appropriate. But this is just one example of what must be done. It is no different in the operational Air Force. It is an officer's duty to take action if there is a breach of integrity. The particular action depends on the situation, but action must be taken.

#### CADET PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TOLERATION

Although toleration is an essential part of the cadet honor system it is viewed differently. Based on the 1984 and 1987 survey results, approximately 80 percent of cadets feel that toleration is a less serious offense than lying, cheating, or stealing (6:76, 9:66). Almost half of the cadets in those surveys would feel guilty if they had to turn someone in for an honor violation (6:40, 9:66). This is a tough concept to live by for young people nowadays. The society from which the cadets come stresses loyalty to peers before institutions. Nonetheless, these cadets do realize that toleration is essential to the successful function of their honor system.

In review of all three surveys, there has been increased support for the toleration clause over the past 4 years. Thirty-nine percent of cadets in 1984 said that the toleration clause should be dropped (6:84). In 1986, only 35 percent of the cadets surveyed wanted to drop the toleration clause (8:14). And in 1987, only 26.5 percent of cadets wanted to drop the toleration clause. This indicates that the cadets know that their system will not work without this important aspect.

On the other hand, a majority of cadets on the past two surveys do not agree that toleration of an honor violation is necessarily a dishonorable act (8:6) (9:12). This area warrants examination. Cadets are saying that toleration does not necessarily reflect on their personal honor. If a cadet tolerates another cadet's honor violation, is that cadet personally dishonorable? Many cadets say no. In the 1987 survey, almost half of the cadets made write-in responses to open-ended questions. The top honor system weakness as identified by cadets was the need to change the toleration aspect. Most felt that toleration should be a duty-related offense. This notion is worth consideration.

#### TOLERATION: DUTY OR HONOR?

As suggested in the Honor Code Reference Handbook, it is a cadet's duty to confront a suspected honor violator. This aspect is essential to the system. Cadet Steve Maus, 1986-87 Cadet Wing Honor Education Officer, described it best when he said, "We cadets feel that lying, cheating, and stealing is dishonorable and unacceptable. Nontoleration is what makes our system work and it is our duty--our payback to the system" (4). Cadets make a distinction between toleration and the rest of their honor code. Write-in responses to the 1987 survey tied toleration to the concept of duty more than ever before (5:19). Maybe toleration should be treated more as a duty violation than strictly as a violation of one cadet's honor.

## Chapter Six

### CONCLUSION

#### FINDINGS

Based on the results of the three most recent cadet honor system surveys, the cadets feel very good about their honor system. They think well of their personal honesty and feel strongly about having an honor code. The cadets, however, perceive problems in some areas. They say that the Academy treats them in many circumstances as though they are not trustworthy. Also, they feel that in some situations, the honor system is not fair and just. They perceive that sometimes intercollegiate athletes receive special treatment at the sanctions level. They also feel that they do not receive adequate feedback from Wing Honor Boards and Honor Sanctions Boards. Additionally, cadets feel that their honor system is abused regularly to enforce rules. They rate the honor education program low for devoting too much time to procedures and administration rather than emphasizing ways of increasing a cadets sense of honor. Lastly, over half the cadets decline to agree that toleration of another cadet's possible dishonesty is a violation of their personal honor. These findings are solely based on the analysis of the cadet surveys.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In trying to determine what the cadets think of their honor system, we must remember that cadet perceptions are paramount. It really does not matter what outsiders think, because if the cadets feel good about their system, it then has the best chance of success. According to these three surveys, the cadets like the changes made by the Honor Assessment Committee in 1984. But in order to get a more accurate picture of what the cadets think, the surveys must be more consistent. They must focus on important areas so that conclusions can be drawn over the years based on similar questions. The questions on these three surveys vary too much to draw precise conclusions.

An important recommendation is to focus on what cadets perceive as specific strengths and weaknesses of their honor system. The surveys can build on earlier cadet answers such as the open-ended questions used on the 1987 honor survey. Such an effort will yield a rank order of each problem or strength and give priorities for solving the problems.

The Honor Education Program must stimulate cadets to search their souls. Cadets tell us in these surveys that they are the most important influence in developing their sense of honor. So, the education program must concentrate on challenging cadets to develop solid rationale for their actions. It should teach them to think. They must internalize the lessons to be learned about honor and ethics. It seems that small group discussion, skits, role-playing, and active duty examples of integrity problems and consequences will all help them to decide how they should think about these important issues. Emphasis should be on values. In addition, adequate feedback from the honor and sanctions board is essential for cadets to get a true picture of the "feelings of the wing" on sensitive honor issues.

Lastly, cadets suggest that their personal honor should not be tied to the toleration aspect of the honor code. More cadets than ever feel that the toleration clause is essential to a cadet run honor system. They feel that it is their duty to confront a suspected violation. But if they tolerate, they do not necessarily feel that this is a violation of their personal honor. I propose that a toleration accusation be handled differently than other honor violations. Initially, the toleration case could be handled through normal honor channels. The Honor Investigation Panel and Wing Honor Board would make their normal findings. Upon finding a cadet in violation of "toleration" at the WHB, the case would be transferred to the discipline arena for a Commandants Disciplinary Board. Toleration of an honor violation would be a Class III violation. This would send the message to the Cadet Wing that this is the most serious duty violation at the Air Force Academy. With this approach, toleration would be treated as the cadets perceive it.

No changes would be necessary in the wording of the cadet honor code. This proposed change only addresses the way cadets are sanctioned under the cadet honor system. It would accurately reflect how the cadets perceive the system should run anyway. A majority of cadets decline to accept toleration of another cadet's possible dishonesty as a personal honor violation. But cadets ardently support keeping the toleration clause as part of their code.

Character development is the most important, yet toughest area to develop among cadets at the Air Force Academy. The current honor system aids in this development better than ever, and the cadets have told us so. The ideas mentioned in this report can be used to "polish-up" an already outstanding honor system. But by making these adjustments, the administration can help the cadets create a system that is more responsive to their needs.

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## **APPENDICES**

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### **APPENDIX A**

Fall, 1984 Honor Survey Questions cited in Research with  
Percentage of Cadet Response

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## CONTINUED

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25. I feel that my current instructors trust me.

- |                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| A. All of them trust me   | 50% |
| B. Most of them trust me  | 42% |
| C. A few of them trust me | 8%  |
| D. None of them trust me  | -   |

40. If I were to turn in another cadet who intentionally committed an honor violation and that cadet was disenrolled, I would feel guilty.

- |                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| A. Agree Strongly    | 16% |
| B. Agree             | 38% |
| C. Neutral           | 19% |
| D. Disagree          | 17% |
| E. Disagree Strongly | 8%  |
| F. No Opinion        | -   |

76. How do you view toleration of an honor violation in relation to the violation itself? Tolerance is:

- |                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| A. A much more serious offense    | 1%  |
| B. A more serious offense         | 2%  |
| C. The same degree of seriousness | 14% |
| D. A less serious offense         | 41% |
| E. A much less serious offense    | 42% |

84. My AOC knows me well enough to fairly evaluate my character.

- |                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| A. Agree Strongly    | 6%  |
| B. Agree             | 24% |
| C. Neutral           | 16% |
| D. Disagree          | 32% |
| E. Disagree Strongly | 20% |

87. Honor training as it currently exists deals more with honor administration than with honor values.

- |                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| A. Agree Strongly    | 19% |
| B. Agree             | 47% |
| C. Neutral           | 18% |
| D. Disagree          | 2%  |
| E. Disagree Strongly | 1%  |
| F. No Opinion        | 4%  |

## **CONTINUED**

92. The most important person in helping develop my sense of honor at the Academy should be:

68% - Self

95. The least important person in helping developing my sense of honor at the Academy should be:

39% - Squadron Training Officer

106. Who should be on Boards deciding guilt or innocence?

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| A. Cadets Only                             | 53% |
| B. A majority of cadets and a few officers | 39% |
| C. Equal number of cadets and officers     | 7%  |
| D. A majority of officers and a few cadets | 1%  |
| E. Officers only                           | 1%  |

107. Who should be on Boards which decide the punishments for violations?

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| A. Cadets Only                             | 39% |
| B. A majority of cadets and a few officers | 43% |
| C. Equal number of cadets and officers     | 13% |
| D. A majority of officers and a few cadets | 3%  |
| E. Officers only                           | 2%  |

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## **CONTINUED**

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### **APPENDIX B**

**Spring, 1986 Honor Survey Questions Cited in Research with  
Percentage of Cadet Response**

## CONTINUED

6. Toleration should be considered a dishonorable act.

A. Strongly Agree	16%
B. Agree	32%
C. Neutral	27%
D. Disagree	17%
E. Strongly Disagree	7%

8. Based on my personal observations, the honor system is fair and just.

A. Strongly Agree	11%
B. Agree	45%
C. Neutral	20%
D. Disagree	20%
E. Strongly Disagree	5%

9. Cadet adherence to the spirit of the Honor Code is improving.

A. Strongly Agree	6%
B. Agree	49%
C. Neutral	33%
D. Disagree	11%
E. Strongly Disagree	2%

14. If the non-toleration clause were dropped from the Honor Code, the honor system would continue to work just as well.

A. Strongly Agree	9%
B. Agree	26%
C. Neutral	22%
D. Disagree	34%
E. Strongly Disagree	9%

---

## CONTINUED

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15. I believe some members of the honor board vote "no-violation", even though the facts dictate otherwise, as a means of applying "discretion" at the honor board level.

A. Strongly Agree	8%
B. Agree	20%
C. Neutral	50%
D. Disagree	17%
E. Strongly Disagree	5%

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**CONTINUED**

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**APPENDIX C**

**Spring, 1987 Honor Survey Questions Cited in Research with  
Percentage of Cadet Response**

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## CONTINUED

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7. I believe that the present state of health of the Honor Code and Honor System is best described as:

A. Alive and Productive	13%
B. Satisfactory	48%
C. Marginal	32%
D. Dead	7%

9. Based on my personal observations, the Honor System is fair and just.

A. Strongly Agree	9%
B. Agree	34%
C. Neutral	26%
D. Disagree	24%
E. Strongly Disagree	7%

12. Toleration should continue to be considered a dishonorable act, as presently defined by the Honor Code.

A. Strongly Agree	14%
B. Agree	33%
C. Neutral	24%
D. Disagree	19%
E. Strongly Disagree	10%

13. The Honor System is used excessively for the enforcement of discipline.

A. Strongly Agree	13%
B. Agree	28%
C. Neutral	27%
D. Disagree	25%
E. Strongly Disagree	7%

17. When I first entered BCT, I thought that living under the Honor Code would require a drastic change in my behavior.

A. Strongly Agree	4%
B. Agree	14%
C. Neutral	13%
D. Disagree	46%
E. Strongly Disagree	23%

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## CONTINUED

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27. The current Honor Education Program is effective in teaching the basic procedures of the Honor System.

A. Strongly Agree	8%
B. Agree	53%
C. Neutral	21%
D. Disagree	14%
E. Strongly Disagree	4%

28. It is possible for an Academy training program to increase one's sense of honor.

A. Strongly Agree	12%
B. Agree	43%
C. Neutral	22%
D. Disagree	15%
E. Strongly Disagree	8%

29. Honor training, as it currently exists, deals more with honor administration than with honor values.

A. Strongly Agree	19%
B. Agree	42%
C. Neutral	24%
D. Disagree	14%
E. Strongly Disagree	1%

31. The Academy policies treat me as though I can be trusted.

A. Strongly Agree	5%
B. Agree	18%
C. Neutral	15%
D. Disagree	30%
E. Strongly Disagree	32%

39. Over the years, the scope of the Honor System has increased to cover more and more specific behaviors which were not previously considered violations.

A. Strongly Agree	24%
B. Agree	43%
C. Neutral	27%
D. Disagree	5%
E. Strongly Disagree	1%

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## CONTINUED

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45. The most important person in helping to develop my sense of honor at the Academy should be:

Self - 73%

46. The second most important person in helping to develop my sense of honor at the Academy should be:

Other Cadets - 44%

47. The third most important person in helping to develop my sense of honor at the Academy should be:

Honor Representative - 24%

50. I receive sufficient feedback about Honor Boards and Sanctions Boards results.

A. Strongly Agree	10%
B. Agree	38%
C. Neutral	20%
D. Disagree	23%
E. Strongly Disagree	9%

56. I am an honorable person.

A. Strongly Agree	47%
B. Agree	44%
C. Neutral	7%
D. Disagree	1%
E. Strongly Disagree	1%

57. The values set forth in the Honor Code concerning lying, stealing, and cheating are values I had when I entered the Academy.

A. Strongly Agree	29%
B. Agree	44%
C. Neutral	14%
D. Disagree	11%
E. Strongly Disagree	2%

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## CONTINUED

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66. How do you view toleration of an honor violation in relation to the violation itself? Toleration is:

- |    |                                |     |
|----|--------------------------------|-----|
| A. | A much more serious offense    | 1%  |
| B. | A more serious offense         | 3%  |
| C. | The same degree of seriousness | 18% |
| D. | A less serious offense         | 41% |
| E. | A much less serious offense    | 37% |

ATE  
LMED  
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